

## Patent Assignment Abstract of Title

### Total Assignments: 2

**Application #:** 09872737

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**PCT #:** NONE

**Publication #:** NONE

**Pub Dt:**

**Inventor:** Thomas A. Soulanille

**Title:** System and method for influencing a position on a search result list generated by a computer network search engine

### Assignment: 1

**Reel/Frame:** 011875/0845 **Received:** 06/13/2001 **Recorded:** 06/01/2001 **Mailed:** 08/20/2001 **Pages:** 4

**Conveyance:** ASSIGNMENT OF ASSIGNORS INTEREST (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).

**Assignor:** SOULANILLE, THOMAS A.

**Exec Dt:** 05/31/2001

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### Assignment: 2

**Reel/Frame:** 013066/0550 **Received:** 07/12/2002 **Recorded:** 07/09/2002 **Mailed:** 09/10/2002 **Pages:** 5

**Conveyance:** MERGER (SEE DOCUMENT FOR DETAILS).

**Assignor:** GOTO.COM, INC

**Exec Dt:** 10/02/2001

**Assignee:** OVERTURE SERVICES, INC.

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Search Results as of: 4/2/2003 2:51:28 P.M.

If you have any comments or questions concerning the data displayed, contact OPR / Assignments at 703-308-9723  
Web interface last modified: Oct. 5, 2002

DERWENT-ACC-NO: 2001-465664

DERWENT-WEEK: 200174

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TITLE: On-line bid management system for automatically managing an auction for determining relative priority for a service in a system, includes checking bids for continuing priority and incrementing bid values to influence priority

INVENTOR: KONIA, B S

PRIORITY-DATA: 2000US-0491747 (January 27, 2000)

PATENT-FAMILY:

PUB-NO	PUB-DATE	LANGUAGE	PAGES
MAIN-IPC			
WO 200155929 A1	August 2, 2001	E	038
G06F 017/60			
AU 200129428 A	August 7, 2001	N/A	000
G06F 017/60			

INT-CL (IPC): G06F017/60

ABSTRACTED-PUB-NO: WO 200155929A

BASIC-ABSTRACT:

NOVELTY - At timed intervals, e.g. each quarter day (200), bids are checked (208) for all bidders (202) and search engines (204) to determine which bid value is highest. Bids may be decremented/incremented within user specified limits, the checking and incrementing steps may be executed a number of times (216,222,224) to achieve desired positions.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION - An INDEPENDENT CLAIM is also included for a vendor inventory control system.

USE - For use in on-line auctions to determine relative priority for a service, e.g. bidding for Internet search engine key-phrases where the advertiser with the highest bid for a given key-phrase appears first in the list, the second appears second, etc..

ADVANTAGE - The ability to check priorities at specified time intervals and to increment bids, provides a system that regularly monitors current rankings and can adjust bids according specified rules.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - The figure is a flow diagram illustrating a method of on-line bid management.

----- KWIC -----

Basic Abstract Text - ABTX (3):

USE - For use in on-line auctions to determine relative priority for a service, e.g. bidding for Internet search engine key-phrases where the advertiser with the highest bid for a given key-phrase appears first in the

list, the second appears second, etc..

DERWENT-ACC-NO: 2001-315890

DERWENT-WEEK: 200133

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TITLE: Method of searching and retrieving links to web sites

INVENTOR: LI, J; SHI, C V ; ZHANG, D ; ZHANG, Y A

PRIORITY-DATA: 2000US-0505351 (February 16, 2000) , 1999US-141438P (June 29, 1999) , 1999US-161459P (October 25, 1999)

PATENT-FAMILY:

PUB-NO	PUB-DATE	LANGUAGE	PAGES
MAIN-IPC			
WO 200101217 A2 \	January 4, 2001	E	062
G06F 000/00			
AU 200060546 A	January 31, 2001	N/A	000
G06F 000/00			

INT-CL (IPC): G06F000/00

ABSTRACTED-PUB-NO: WO 200101217A

BASIC-ABSTRACT:

NOVELTY - Method consists in maintaining database tables corresponding to advertiser web sites and containing database fields with ID information, web addresses and web site bids, maintaining a second set of database tables with user ID information and reward amounts, receiving a consumer search query, processing it to identify the web site, and sorting the sites according to bids. Links are then displayed to the web sites in sort order, higher-bid sites being displayed more prominently than lower ones, and a web page is displayed. Storing of bids and rewards is performed if the user is outside a time window and the user is given a set of instructions which are different for different links.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION - There are INDEPENDENT CLAIMS for (1) a computer program, (2) a process for displaying advertiser information, (3) a method of selectively delivering commercial messages to shoppers in retail outlets over a digital computer advertising network, (4) a digital computer advertising network, (5) a server on a digital computer network.

USE - Method is for Internet advertising.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - The drawing shows an improved cost-per-click advertising system.

----- KWIC -----

Basic Abstract Text - ABTX (1):

NOVELTY - Method consists in maintaining database tables corresponding to advertiser web sites and containing database fields with ID information, web addresses and web site bids, maintaining a second set of database tables with user ID information and reward amounts, receiving a consumer search query, processing it to identify the web site, and sorting the sites according to

bids. Links are then displayed to the web sites in sort order, higher-bid sites being displayed more prominently than lower ones, and a web page is displayed. Storing of bids and rewards is performed if the user is outside a time window and the user is given a set of instructions which are different for different links.

DERWENT-ACC-NO: 2002-011327

DERWENT-WEEK: 200219

48

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TITLE: Operating method for a search engine providing  
barter-per-placement system in which advertiser offers  
quantity of goods and/or services in exchange for placing  
advertising in pop-up windows and banner advertisements

INVENTOR: LAIFER, L

PRIORITY-DATA: 2000US-0553961 (April 21, 2000)

PATENT-FAMILY:

PUB-NO	PUB-DATE	LANGUAGE	PAGES
MAIN-IPC			
WO 200182178 A2	November 1, 2001	E	048
G06F 017/60			
AU 200155506 A	November 7, 2001	N/A	000
G06F 017/60			

INT-CL (IPC): G06F017/60

ABSTRACTED-PUB-NO: WO 200182178A

BASIC-ABSTRACT:

NOVELTY - The method involves providing a web site for a search engine. Advertisers are offered at least one pop-up window and a banner advertisement which will appear on at least one page of the search engine web site. Bids are solicited from advertisers, each having a URL. Each bid corresponds to an amount that each advertiser is willing to pay to have its URL appear in the pop-up window. The URL of at least the advertiser having the highest bid is placed in the pop-up window. The advertiser is charged with the highest bid amount.

The step of charging the advertiser comprises charging an amount payable in a currency.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION - INDEPENDENT CLAIMS are included for a search engine for use in network such as the Internet, for a method of bidding on placement of advertisement, for a method of advertising over a network and for an apparatus for advertising over a network.

USE - For search engines used in networks such as the Internet.

ADVANTAGE - Improved method of conducting electronic commerce where businesses with Web sites can improve likelihood that consumers will visit their sites, and thus ultimately increase sales. Allows advertisers to increase exposure to relevant consumer bases.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - The figure shows distributed database for storing multimedia information.

Client computers 12

Server computers 14

Network. 16

----- KWIC -----

Basic Abstract Text - ABTX (3):

DETAILED DESCRIPTION - INDEPENDENT CLAIMS are included for a search engine for use in network such as the Internet, for a method of bidding on placement of advertisement, for a method of advertising over a network and for an apparatus for advertising over a network.

DERWENT-ACC-NO: 2002-105680

DERWENT-WEEK: 200214

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TITLE: Search result list providing method for communication network, involves selecting predetermined number of identified search listings according to bid amount and arranging in random order for display

INVENTOR: SOULANILLE, T A

PRIORITY-DATA: 2001US-0872737 (June 1, 2001) , 1999US-0322677 (May 28, 1999)

PATENT-FAMILY:

PUB-NO	PUB-DATE	LANGUAGE	PAGES
MAIN-IPC			
US 20010051940 A1	December 13, 2001	N/A	030
G06F 017/30			

INT-CL (IPC): G06F017/30, G06F017/60

ABSTRACTED-PUB-NO: US20010051940A

BASIC-ABSTRACT:

NOVELTY - Database stores search listings, each associated with an advertiser and having search term and bid amount modifiably bid by advertiser. The listings matching with search request received from searcher, are identified from database. A preset number of identified search listings is selected according to bid amount and arranged in random order to display a search result list which is then communicated to searcher.

USE - For searching information on a communication network such as Internet.

ADVANTAGE - Provides an improved method for selecting and ordering search result listings that maximize revenue for search engine operator as well as improves click through rates for web-site promoters.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWING(S) - The figure shows a flow diagram that illustrates search listings selection method.

----- KWIC -----

Basic Abstract Text - ABTX (1):

NOVELTY - Database stores search listings, each associated with an advertiser and having search term and bid amount modifiably bid by advertiser. The listings matching with search request received from searcher, are identified from database. A preset number of identified search listings is selected according to bid amount and arranged in random order to display a search result list which is then communicated to searcher.



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fat*

PGPUB-DOCUMENT-NUMBER: 20010042064

PGPUB-FILING-TYPE: new

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20010042064 A1

TITLE: System and method for influencing a position on a  
search result list generated by a computer network  
search engine

PUBLICATION-DATE: November 15, 2001

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Lee, Ka Luk	San Gabriel	CA	US
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ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:

NAME	CITY	STATE	COUNTRY	TYPE CODE
GoTo.com.				02

APPL-NO: 09/ 911674

DATE FILED: July 24, 2001

RELATED-US-APPL-DATA:

child 09911674 A1 20010724

parent continuation-of 08322677 19941013 US UNKNOWN

INT-CL: [07], G06F017/30

US-CL-PUBLISHED: 707/3

US-CL-CURRENT: 707/3

REFERENCE-FIGURES: 8

ABSTRACT:

A system and method for enabling information providers using a computer network such as the Internet to influence a position for a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The system and method of the present invention provides a database having accounts for the network information providers. Each account contains contact and billing information for a network information provider. In addition, each account contains at least one search listing having at least three components: a description, a search term comprising one or more keywords, and a bid amount. The network information provider may add, delete, or modify a search listing after logging into his or her account via an authentication process. The network information provider influences a position for a search listing in the providers account by first selecting a search term relevant to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a search listing. The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new bid amount, which is preferably a money amount, for a search listing. The system and method of the present invention then compares this bid amount with all other bid amounts for the same search term, and generates a rank value for all search listings having that search term. The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. A higher bid by a network information provider will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement.

#### CLAIMS:

1. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and recording a retrieval request event in database corresponding to the searcher's apostrophe retrieval request.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of updating a search listing in the search listing database in response to a request from a network information provider.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of including on the search result list search listings having a bid amount of zero.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the account database comprises at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount, an account balance; and a unique account identifier.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the search listings in the account record are organized into at least one subaccount within the account record.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of including on the search result list search listings having a bid amount of zero.
7. The method of claim 4, wherein the retrieval request event comprises the search term and the bid amount of the search listing, and an account identifier associated with the search listing.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the retrieval request event further includes a rank value.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the retrieval request event is linked to the account record having an account identifier that corresponds to the account identifier listed on the retrieval request event.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the bid amount of the retrieval request event is charged to the account balance of the account record having an account identifier that matches the account identifier of the retrieval request event.

11. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to network information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and estimating the cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected by a searcher within a specified time period.

13. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to network information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and generating a search listing activity report including information on retrieval requests received from searchers during a specified time period.

14. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to network information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and suggesting alternative search terms to the searcher for generating additional search result lists related to the searcher's search request.

15. A method of enabling a network information provider to update information relating to a search listing on a search result list generated by a computer network search engine, comprising the steps of: maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount; and an account identifier; receiving from a network information provider a change request for a search listing in the network information provider's account; updating the search

listing in the network information provider's account record in response to the change request; and determining a position substantially in real time for the updated search listing in a search result list generated by the search engine in response to a search request received from a searcher using the computer network, where the search term of the updated search listing generates a match with the search request and the position of the updated search listing in the search result list is determined using the bid amount.

16. The method of claim 15, where the search term of each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the search listings in the search result list are sorted in order of decreasing bid amount.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of assigning an ordinal rank value to each search listing in the search result list in order of decreasing bid amount, with the smallest rank value assigned to the search listing in the search result list having the highest bid amount, and the largest rank value assigned to the search listing having the lowest bid amount.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of determining creation time value for each search listing in the account database; identifying search listings within a search result list having equivalent bid amounts; and within a group of search listings within a search result list that have equivalent bid amounts, sorting the search listings in order from earliest to most recent creation time value.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the account record further includes an account balance.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the account balance is positive.

22. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of subtracting the bid amount from the account balance substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by the searcher from the search result list.

23. The method of claim 20, where the search listing further comprises a web site title, a web site description, and a web site Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of recording a retrieval request event substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by a remote searcher from the search result list.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the retrieval request event comprises an account identifier, and a bid amount.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a search term.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a web site URL.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a rank value.

29. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of applying a charge to an account balance, where the charge corresponds to a bid amount recorded in a retrieval request event having an account identifier that matches the account identifier corresponding to the account balance.

30. A method of enabling a web site promoters using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by a search engine substantially in real time in response to a search

request received from a remote computer over the computer network, comprising the steps of: maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of web site promoters of the computer network, said account record including an account identifier, and at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount; providing the web site promoter with authenticated login access, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter to modify the web site promoter's account record; modifying a search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from said web site promoter; and generating a search result list comprised of search listings wherein the search term for each search listing generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order corresponding to the bid amounts of the search listings.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing having a bid amount of zero.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing that is not included in the account database.

33. The method of claim 30, wherein the step of modifying the search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from the web site promoter is performed substantially in real time.

34. The method of claim 30, wherein the search listing further includes a title, a description, and a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

35. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

36. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of deleting a search listing substantially in real time from an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

37. The method of claim 30, wherein the account record further comprises an account balance.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the account balance is positive.

39. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of adding substantially in real time a money amount to the account balance of the web site promoters upon receiving a request from the web site promoter.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

41. The method of claim 30, wherein the search term and the search request each comprise at least one character string.

42. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of generating an activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

43. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected by a searcher at a remote computer in a specified time period.

45. The method of claim 30, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoter's search listing comprises a money amount that is deducted from the account

balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search is selected by a remote searcher.

46. The method of claim 30, wherein the search listings of the web site promoters in the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein an ordinal rank value is assigned in ascending order to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

48. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

49. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of generating a search listing activity report.

50. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of suggesting alternative search terms for the creation of new search listings upon the request of the web site promoter.

51. The method of claim 30, wherein said computer network is the Internet.

52. A method of enabling a web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine, said method comprising the steps of: maintaining a database having at least one account record for at least one web site promoter using the computer network, said account record including: at least one search listing, where each search listing includes a search term field having at least one keyword, a bid amount, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) corresponding to the address of a document residing on a network web server, a description, and a title; an account balance; payment processing information for the web site promoter said payment processing information maintained isolated from public access via the computer network; payment histories of the web site promoter; and search listing histories of the web site promoter; providing the web site promoter with login access in response to authentication, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter access to modify the web site promoter's account record, the web site promoter not being provided with access to modify account records of others; modifying substantially in real time the search listing of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter; receiving a search request, the search request including at least one keyword, the search request being received over the Internet from a searcher at a remote computer; and generating a search result list in response to the search request, the search result list including search listings of the account records on the computer network, wherein the search term field for each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order determined using the bid amounts of the search listings.

53. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account of web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

54. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of deleting a search listing substantially in real time from the account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoters.

55. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of adding a money amount to the account balance of a web site promoter substantially in real time upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

56. The method of claim 55, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

57. The method of claim 52, wherein the keyword comprises a character string.

58. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of generating an account activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

59. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the estimated cost is calculated as a product of the bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected in the specified time period.

61. The method of claim 52, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoter's search listing comprises a money amount that will be deducted from the account balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search listing is selected.

62. The method of claim 52, wherein the rank value is an ordinal value.

63. The method of claim 52, wherein the search listings of the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein a rank value is assigned to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

65. The method of claim 64, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

66. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of generating a search listing activity report.

67. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of suggesting alternative search terms upon the request of the web site promoter.

68. A system for enabling an advertising web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine comprising: a computer system having stored thereon a database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of advertising web site promoters using the computer network, the account record including: at least one search listing including a search term having at least one keyword, a bid amount, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) corresponding to the address of a document residing on a network server, a description, and a title; an account balance; a history of search listings included in the advertising web site promoter's account record; payment processing information, wherein said payment processing information is accessible to the computer system and isolated from public access via the computer network; and a payment history; programming code for providing the advertising web site promoter with login access in response to authentication, wherein the advertising web site promoters login access grants the advertising web site promoter access to modify the advertising web site promoter's account, the advertising web site promoter not being provided with access to modify the accounts of others; programming code on said computer system for adding money to the account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code on said computer system for adding a search listing to an account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a

request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code on said computer system for deleting a search listing to an account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code on said computer system for modifying in substantially real time the search listing of an advertising web site promoter upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code for generating in substantially real time an activity report for an advertising web site promoter upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code for receiving a search request from a remote computer, the search request including at least one keyword, the search request being received over the computer network from the remote computer through a web site that is publicly accessible without authentication; and programming code for generating in substantially real time a search result list in response to the search request, the search result list including search listings from the accounts on the database, wherein the search term for each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order determined using the bid amounts of the search listings.



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TITLE: System and method for influencing a position on a search result list generated by a computer network search engine

PUBLICATION-DATE: November 29, 2001

INVENTOR-INFORMATION:

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ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:

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APPL-NO: 09/ 918241

DATE FILED: July 30, 2001

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child 09918241 A1 20010730

parent continuation-of 09322677 19990528 US GRANTED

parent-patent 6269361 US

INT-CL: [07], G06F007/00

US-CL-PUBLISHED: 707/3

US-CL-CURRENT: 707/3

REFERENCE-FIGURES: 1

*see of provisional double  
pat*  
*no ✓  
not with  
09/872,737  
but possibly with  
09/511,674*

#### ABSTRACT:

A system and method for enabling information providers using a computer network such as the Internet to influence a position for a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine. The system and method of the present invention provides a database having accounts for the network information providers. Each account contains contact and billing information for a network information provider. In addition, each account contains at least one search listing having at least three components: a description, a search term comprising one or more keywords, and a bid amount. The network information provider may add, delete, or modify a search listing after logging into his or her account via an authentication process. The network information provider influences a position for a search listing in the provider's account by first selecting a search term relevant to the content of the web site or other information source to be listed. The network information provider enters the search term and the description into a search listing. The network information provider influences the position for a search listing through a continuous online competitive bidding process. The bidding process occurs when the network information provider enters a new bid amount, which is preferably a money amount, for a search listing. The system and method of the present invention then compares this bid amount with all other bid amounts for the same search term, and generates a rank value for all search listings having that search term. The rank value generated by the bidding process determines where the network information providers listing will appear on the search results list page that is generated in response to a query of the search term by a searcher located at a client computer on the computer network. A higher bid by a network information provider will result in a higher rank value and a more advantageous placement.

#### CLAIMS:

1. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to retrieve information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and recording a retrieval request event in database corresponding to the searcher's apostrophe retrieval request.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of updating a search listing in the search listing database in response to a request from a network information provider.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of including on the search result list search listings having a bid amount of zero.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the account database comprises at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount, an account balance; and a unique account identifier.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the search listings in the account record are organized into at least one subaccount within the account record.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of including on the search result list search listings having a bid amount of zero.
7. The method of claim 4, wherein the retrieval request event comprises the

search term and the bid amount of the search listing, and an account identifier associated with the search listing.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the retrieval request event further includes a rank value.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the retrieval request event is linked to the account record having an account identifier that corresponds to the account identifier listed on the retrieval request event.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the bid amount of the retrieval request event is charged to the account balance of the account record having an account identifier that matches the account identifier of the retrieval request event.

11. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to network information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and estimating the cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected by a searcher within a specified time period.

13. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to network information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and generating a search listing activity report including information on retrieval requests received from searchers during a specified time period.

14. A method of generating a search result list substantially in real time in response to a search request from a searcher using a computer network, comprising: maintaining a database including a plurality of search listings, wherein each search listing is associated with a bid amount and a search term; receiving a search request from the searcher; identifying the search listings having search terms generating a match with the search request; ordering the identified search listings into a search result list in accordance with the values of the respective bid amounts for the identified search listings; receiving a retrieval request from the searcher to network information associated with a search listing in the search result list; and suggesting alternative search terms to the searcher for generating additional search result lists related to the searcher's search request.

15. A method of enabling a network information provider to update information relating to a search listing on a search result list generated by a computer network search engine, comprising the steps of: maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of network information providers, said account record including at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount; and an account identifier;

receiving from a network information provider a change request for a search listing in the network information provider's account; updating the search listing in the network information provider's account record in response to the change request; and determining a position substantially in real time for the updated search listing in a search result list generated by the search engine in response to a search request received from a searcher using the computer network, where the search term of the updated search listing generates a match with the search request and the position of the updated search listing in the search result list is determined using the bid amount.

16. The method of claim 15, where the search term of each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the search listings in the search result list are sorted in order of decreasing bid amount.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of assigning an ordinal rank value to each search listing in the search result list in order of decreasing bid amount, with the smallest rank value assigned to the search listing in the search result list having the highest bid amount, and the largest rank value assigned to the search listing having the lowest bid amount.

19. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of determining creation time value for each search listing in the account database; identifying search listings within a search result list having equivalent bid amounts; and within a group of search listings within a search result list that have equivalent bid amounts, sorting the search listings in order from earliest to most recent creation time value.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the account record further includes an account balance.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the account balance is positive.

22. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of subtracting the bid amount from the account balance substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by the searcher from the search result list.

23. The method of claim 20, where the search listing further comprises a web site title, a web site description, and a web site Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

24. The method of claim 23, further comprising the step of recording a retrieval request event substantially in real time when a search listing is selected by a remote searcher from the search result list.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the retrieval request event comprises an account identifier, and a bid amount.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a search term.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a web site URL.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein the retrieval request event further comprises a rank value.

29. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of applying a charge to an account balance, where the charge corresponds to a bid amount recorded in a retrieval request event having an account identifier that matches the account identifier corresponding to the account balance.

30. A method of enabling a web site promoters using a computer network to

update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by a search engine substantially in real time in response to a search request received from a remote computer over the computer network, comprising the steps of: maintaining an account database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of web site promoters of the computer network, said account record including an account identifier, and at least one search listing having a search term and a bid amount; providing the web site promoter with authenticated login access, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter to modify the web site promoter's account record; modifying a search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from said web site promoter; and generating a search result list comprised of search listings wherein the search term for each search listing generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order corresponding to the bid amounts of the search listings.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing having a bid amount of zero.

32. The method of claim 30, wherein the search result list further includes at least one search listing that is not included in the account database.

33. The method of claim 30, wherein the step of modifying the search listing of the account record upon receiving a request from the web site promoter is performed substantially in real time.

34. The method of claim 30, wherein the search listing further includes a title, a description, and a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

35. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

36. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of deleting a search listing substantially in real time from an account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

37. The method of claim 30, wherein the account record further comprises an account balance.

38. The method of claim 37, wherein the account balance is positive.

39. The method of claim 37, further comprising the step of adding substantially in real time a money amount to the account balance of the web site promoters upon receiving a request from the web site promoter.

40. The method of claim 39, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

41. The method of claim 30, wherein the search term and the search request each comprise at least one character string.

42. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of generating an activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

43. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

44. The method of claim 43, wherein the estimated cost of a search listing for the specified time period is calculated as a product of the current bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected by a searcher at a remote computer in a specified time period.

45. The method of claim 30, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoter's search listing comprises a money amount that is deducted from the account balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search is selected by a remote searcher.

46. The method of claim 30, wherein the search listings of the web site promoters in the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

47. The method of claim 46, wherein an ordinal rank value is assigned in ascending order to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

48. The method of claim 25, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

49. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of generating a search listing activity report.

50. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of suggesting alternative search terms for the creation of new search listings upon the request of the web site promoter.

51. The method of claim 30, wherein said computer network is the Internet.

52. A method of enabling a web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine, said method comprising the steps of: maintaining a database having at least one account record for at least one web site promoter using the computer network, said account record including: at least one search listing, where each search listing includes a search term field having at least one keyword, a bid amount, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) corresponding to the address of a document residing on a network web server, a description, and a title; an account balance; payment processing information for the web site promoter said payment processing information maintained isolated from public access via the computer network; payment histories of the web site promoter; and search listing histories of the web site promoter; providing the web site promoter with login access in response to authentication, wherein the web site promoter's login access permits the web site promoter access to modify the web site promoter's account record, the web site promoter not being provided with access to modify account records of others; modifying substantially in real time the search listing of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter; receiving a search request, the search request including at least one keyword, the search request being received over the Internet from a searcher at a remote computer; and generating a search result list in response to the search request, the search result list including search listings of the account records on the computer network, wherein the search term field for each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order determined using the bid amounts of the search listings.

53. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of adding a search listing substantially in real time to an account of web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

54. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of deleting a search listing substantially in real time from the account record of a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoters.

55. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of adding a money amount to the account balance of a web site promoter substantially in real time

upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

56. The method of claim 55, wherein the money amount has been verified by an external financial authorization network.

57. The method of claim 52, wherein the keyword comprises a character string.

58. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of generating an account activity report for a web site promoter upon receiving a request from said web site promoter.

59. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of estimating a cost of a search listing for a specified time period upon receiving a request from a web site promoter.

60. The method of claim 59, wherein the estimated cost is calculated as a product of the bid amount of the search listing and a projected number of times the search listing is selected in the specified time period.

61. The method of claim 52, wherein the bid amount of a web site promoter's search listing comprises a money amount that will be deducted from the account balance of said web site promoter's account each time the search listing is selected.

62. The method of claim 52, wherein the rank value is an ordinal value.

63. The method of claim 52, wherein the search listings of the search result list are sorted in decreasing order from highest to lowest bid amounts.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein a rank value is assigned to each search listing of the search result list in the sorted order starting at the search listing with the highest bid amount, which is assigned the smallest rank value, and ending with the search listing with the lowest bid amount, which is assigned the largest rank value.

65. The method of claim 64, further comprising the step of displaying data from the search result list at the remote computer.

66. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of generating a search listing activity report.

67. The method of claim 52, further comprising the step of suggesting alternative search terms upon the request of the web site promoter.

68. A system for enabling an advertising web site promoter using a computer network to update information relating to a search listing within a search result list generated by an Internet search engine comprising: a computer system having stored thereon a database having at least one account record for each of a plurality of advertising web site promoters using the computer network, the account record including: at least one search listing including a search term having at least one keyword, a bid amount, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) corresponding to the address of a document residing on a network server, a description, and a title; an account balance; a history of search listings included in the advertising web site promoter's account record; payment processing information, wherein said payment processing information is accessible to the computer system and isolated from public access via the computer network; and a payment history; programming code for providing the advertising web site promoter with login access in response to authentication, wherein the advertising web site promoter's login access grants the advertising web site promoter access to modify the advertising web site promoter's account, the advertising web site promoter not being provided with access to modify the accounts of others; programming code on said computer system for adding money to the account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming

code on said computer system for adding a search listing to an account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code on said computer system for deleting a search listing to an account of an advertising web site promoter in substantially real time upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code on said computer system for modifying in substantially real time the search listing of an advertising web site promoter upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code for generating in substantially real time an activity report for an advertising web site promoter upon receiving a request from said advertising web site promoter; programming code for receiving a search request from a remote computer, the search request including at least one keyword, the search request being received over the computer network from the remote computer through a web site that is publicly accessible without authentication; and programming code for generating in substantially real time a search result list in response to the search request, the search result list including search listings from the accounts on the database, wherein the search term for each search listing in the search result list generates a match with the search request, the search listings in the search result list arranged in an order determined using the bid amounts of the search listings.